



# Utilizing Volunteers in Summer Meal Programs

May 2025



OHIO





## No Kid Hungry Ohio works to end childhood hunger in Ohio.

At No Kid Hungry, we are committed to ensuring that every kid has 3 healthy meals a day, 365 days a year.

Using proven, practical strategies, we partner with schools, community based organizations, and government agencies to launch and enhance programs providing healthy meals and expanding access to nutritious food.





# Children's Hunger Alliance

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- Statewide Agency founded in 1970
- Ensure children receive access to healthy food:
  - **Early Care**-- USDA Sponsorship for In-Home Child Care & Childcare Centers
  - **Out-of-School**-- USDA Sponsorship for Afterschool Programs
  - **Summer**—USDA Sponsorship of Summer Food Service Program & assist schools and community organizations increase summer meal participation
  - **In-School**-- Assist schools to increase participation in breakfast
  - **Weekend Meal Boxes**



CHA also offers nutrition education in early care & out-of-school-time settings!

# Increasing Meal Participation

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- Includes school breakfast, lunch, and summer meal access
- CHA staff consult with schools and other institutions to increase and expand access to these critical meals by:
  - Identifying & overcoming barriers
  - Suggestions for best practices based on individual program needs
  - Providing grants or connections to other funding
  - Sharing best practices, toolkits, resources
- Lobbying & advocacy efforts expand participation statewide

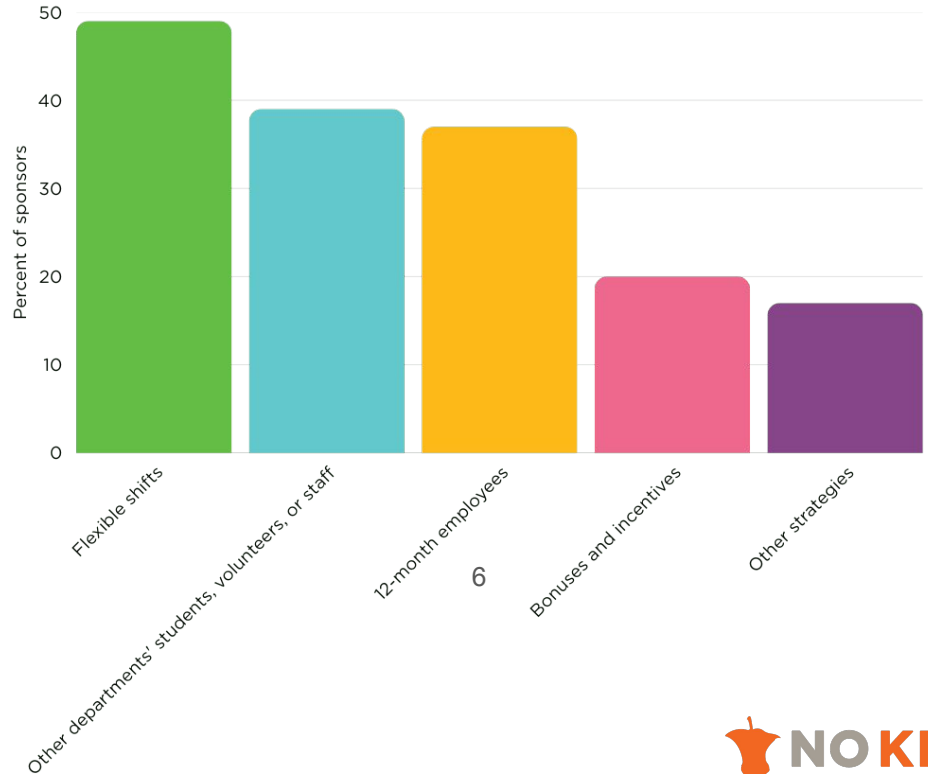


# Summer 2024 Staffing Challenges

- Nationwide, staffing was considered a top-three challenge by **60% of sponsors**.
- In Ohio, **more than 1 in 4** summer meals sponsors were understaffed.
- Additional staff was the **number one need** for Ohio sponsors to continue or expand rural non-congregate meal service.

# Staffing Solutions

- Nationwide, sponsors used a range of strategies to address staffing issues.
- “Other strategies” included hiring 9-month and 10-month employees, seasonal staff, and more.
- Staffing sources included:
  - Job and volunteer pipeline programs (Job Corps, youth job programs, AmeriCorps)
  - Partner staff (Head Start, libraries)
  - School district staff (central district administration, paraprofessionals, coaches) and student volunteers



Staffing Solutions



**Family  
Advocacy  
Center**

Help from the heart.

**FUEL FOR KIDS**





*Volunteers  
do not  
necessarily  
have the  
time; they  
just have  
the heart.”*  
Elizabeth  
Andrew









Businesses – Adopt a day!





# Service Clubs!

High School  
Students  
Community  
Service  
Hours

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer  <a href="#">Sign Up</a>	2	3
4	5 1:00pm-3:00pm Meal Packer  <a href="#">Sign Up</a>	6 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer  <a href="#">Sign Up</a>	7 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer  <a href="#">Full</a>	8 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer  <a href="#">Sign Up</a>	9	10
11	12 1:00pm-3:00pm Meal Packer	13 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer	14 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer	15 8:30am-10:30am Meal Packer	16	17



# Utilizing Volunteers in Non-Congregate Summer Meal Programs

How Giles County School Nutrition Used Community Support to Distribute Summer  
Food Boxes

Sunny Mitchell, RDN  
School Nutrition Director

# About Us

- ▶ - Giles County School Nutrition Program
- ▶ - 8 school sites served
- ▶ - Community-focused and rural
- ▶ - Strong partnerships with families, churches, and civic organizations
- ▶ - USDA Summer Food Service Program participant

# Why We Needed Volunteers

- ▶ - Large geographical area
- ▶ - Weekly 7-day food boxes for children
- ▶ - Distribution every Thursday 8-4:30
- ▶ - High Demand- High percentage Economic disadvantage
- ▶ - Limited staff capacity during summer months

# Our Volunteer Partners

- ▶ - Local churches (helped pack and distribute)
- ▶ - Firefighters and first responders
- ▶ -Local Business- sent volunteers to nearby sites
- ▶ -Teachers and Principals
- ▶ - Parents and grandparents
- ▶ - High school students earning service hours
- ▶ - Community organizations-(healthy department, county commissioners, state rep.)
- ▶ General public outreach



# Reaching Out for Support

- ▶ - County Commissioners:
  - ▶ - Personally contacted to share the need for volunteers
  - ▶ - Many helped spread the word through their networks
  - ▶ - Provided visibility and credibility to our efforts
- ▶ - Local Radio Station:
  - ▶ - Ran a public service announcement asking for volunteers
  - ▶ - Reached rural families who don't use social media
  - ▶ - Helped us fill critical roles early in the summer
- ▶ “We didn’t just wait for help—we invited our community in, and they showed up.”

# Volunteer Roles

- ▶ - Directing traffic at pickup locations
- ▶ - Handing out meals with a smile
- ▶ - Helping with clean-up and box breakdown
- ▶ - Promoting the program in their networks

# Benefits of Community Involvement

- ▶ - Increased trust in the program
- ▶ - Built long-term support for school nutrition
- ▶ - Children saw familiar faces from their neighborhood
- ▶ - Improved communication and outreach
- ▶ - Inspired year-round community partnerships

# Challenges and Solutions



- ▶ **\*\*Challenge:\*\*** Last-minute cancellations
- ▶ **\*\*Solution:\*\*** Created a back-up list of trained volunteers
  
- ▶ **\*\*Challenge:\*\*** Traffic control at busy sites
- ▶ **\*\*Solution:\*\*** recruited more volunteers and ran 2 distribution lines
- ▶ **\*\*Challenge:\*\*** Hot weather
- ▶ **\*\*Solution:\*\*** Provided water, shade tents, fans



# Advice for Other Programs

- ▶ - Don't be afraid to ask—people want to help
- ▶ - Keep the volunteer process simple
- ▶ - Say thank you loudly and often
- ▶ - Treat volunteers like VIPs—they are
- ▶ - Start building partnerships before summer begins

# Thank You & Contact Info

- ▶ Questions?
- ▶ Sunny Mitchell, RDN
- ▶ School Nutrition Director
- ▶  [Swmitchell@gcboe.us](mailto:Swmitchell@gcboe.us)
- ▶  931-309-0231



# ***Workforce Solutions***

Steve Sturgill, CAO Executive Director  
Luanne Valentine, Program Director



# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

## □ Workforce & Community Development Division of Community Action Organization of Scioto County, Inc.

### □ Activities and Services:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – Title I
- Ohio Means Jobs – Scioto County Center
- Pathways to a Healthy Pregnancy
- Women, Infants, Children (WIC)
- Family Strong
- Dads Matter
- Summer Food Service Program
- Child and Adult Care Feeding Program
- Behavioral Health
- Older Adult Home Modification Program

### □ Staffing

- 32 CAO full-time employees
- 2 CAO part-time employees
- 3 ODJFS Staff, including Veteran Representative
- 3 Participants through Vantage Services



# 2025 SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

## □ Approximately 30 sites

- 6 congregate sites with grab-n-go breakfast and lunch meals on closed days
- 24 grab-n-go sites with 7 days of breakfast and lunch meals
- Will be including additional fruits and veg menu

## □ Staffing

- 1 Director (5% FTE)
- 1 Program Coordinator (10% FTE)
- 1 Lead Cook
- 1 Assistant Cook



# VOLUNTEERS

## ❑ Congregate Site Volunteers

- ❑ Each site, except for community pool, designates at least two staff who complete required training, distribute food, and maintain necessary count sheets



## ❑ Other Volunteers

- ❑ Approximately 15 youth, between the ages of 14 and 24, assist with meal preparation, packaging, delivery, and distribution
- ❑ All volunteers must complete required training, compile delivery slips, and maintain necessary count sheets
  - ❑ Youth are provided through a paid work experience program operated by CAO – Workforce Solutions

# YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE

## ▣ Programs providing paid work experience activity

- ▣ Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act – eligibility is barrier based but can serve 14–24-year-old youth
- ▣ Comprehensive Case Management Employment Program (TANF) – eligibility includes youth between 14-24 years of age, residing in a household at 200% of poverty or less that includes a minor child
- ▣ Summer Youth Employment Program – eligibility includes youth between 14-18 years of age, attending secondary school, residing in a household at 200% of poverty or less (the youth is the minor in the household)
- ▣ Growing Rural Independence Together (GRIT) – eligibility is not limited but each participant must complete the Future Plans career assessment and the work experience placement must align with career goals (waiting on state

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## CAO Workforce Solutions

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Resources!







## Additional Resources

- [Webinar Recording: Smart Hiring: Leveraging Student Workers for Impactful Summer Meal Programs](#)
- [Upcoming Webinar: Designing Participant-Centered Non-Congregate Summer Meal Programs](#)
- [Summer Meals Student Workforce Toolkit](#)
- [Summer Meals Outreach Toolkit](#)